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Fantastic
$1.50 US
$2.05 CAN
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Stan Lee presents:
THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
DAYS OF RECENT PAST
"REED RICHARDS... MISTER FANTASTIC!
"BENJAMIN GRIMM... THE THING!
"JOHNNY STORM... THE HUMAN TORCH!
"SUSAN RICHARDS... THE INVISIBLE WOMAN!
"THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU COULDN'T PICK UP A DAILY PAPER...OR CATCH THE EVENING NEWS...WITHOUT SEEING SOME MENTION OF THEIR LATEST EXPLOIT!
"WHETHER THEY WERE BATTLING A DEADLY SUPER-MENACE, OR MOUNTING A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION INTO THE UNKNOWN, THEY WERE THE WORLD'S GREATEST CELEBRITIES!
"THEY WERE THE FANTASTIC FOUR!"
TOM DEFALCO & PAUL RYAN • DAN BULANADI • JEFF POWELL • JOHN KALISZ • RALPH MACCHIO
SCRIPT, PLOT & PENCILS INKS LETTERS COLORS EDITOR

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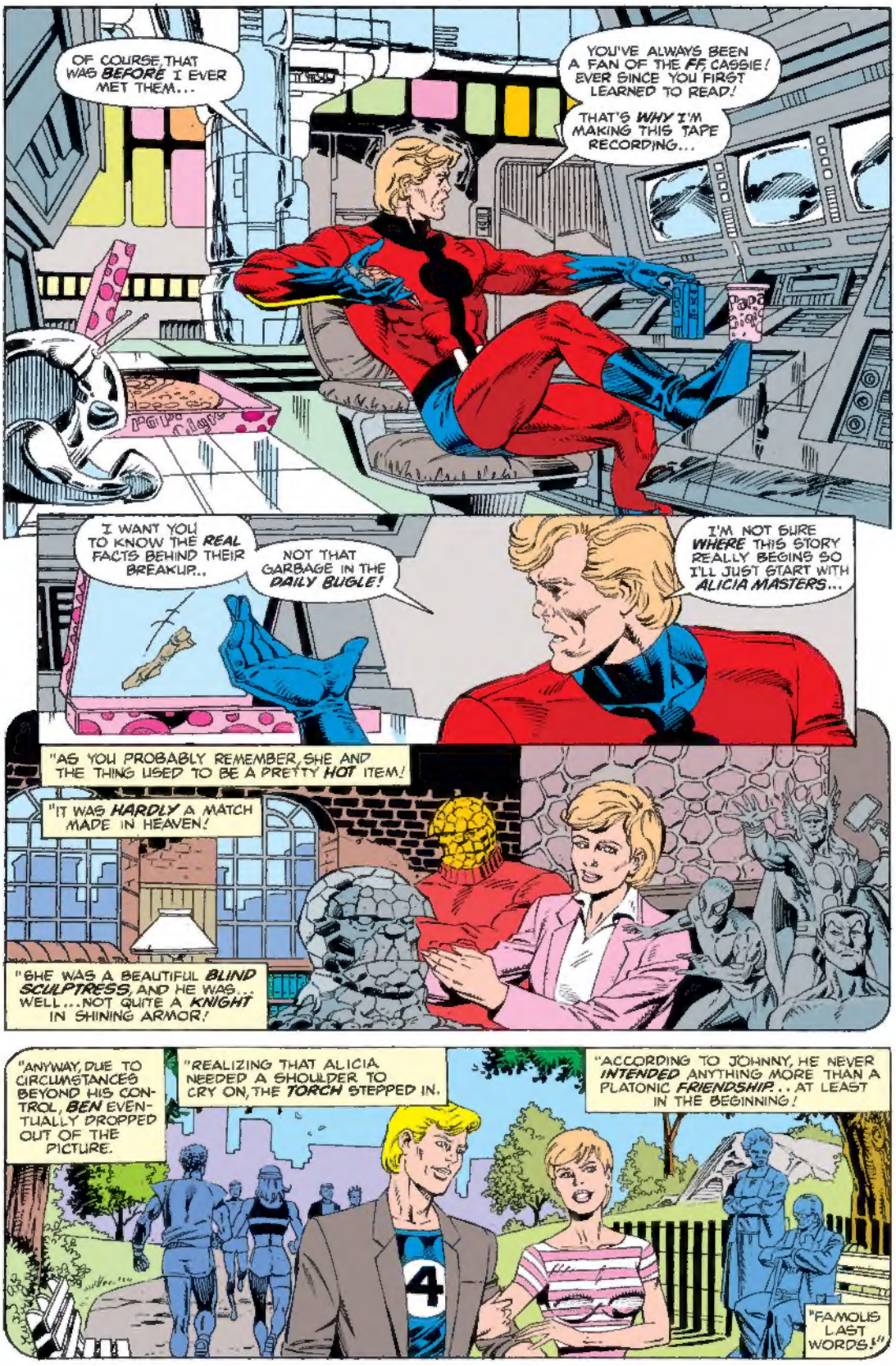
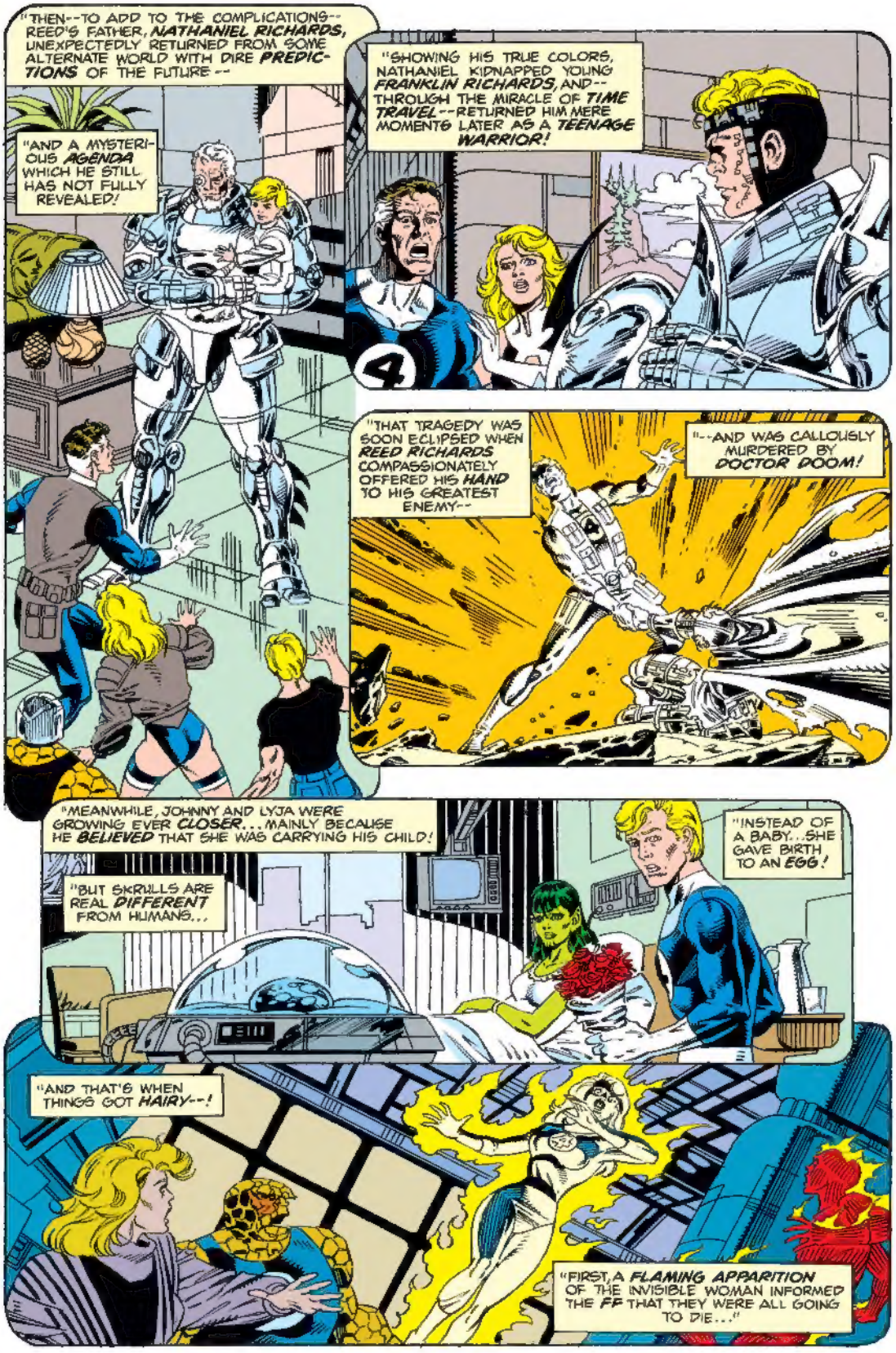
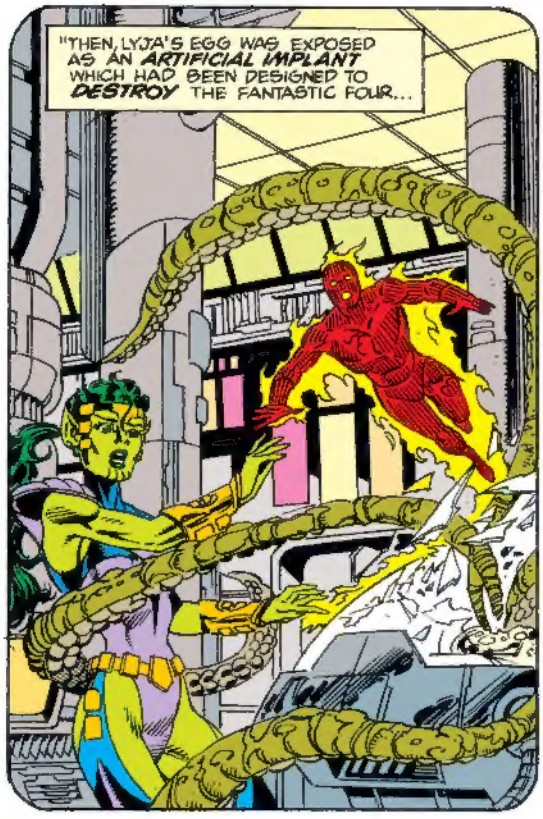

OF COURSE, THAT WAS BEFORE I EVER MET THEM...
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF THE FF, CASSIE! EVER SINCE YOU FIRST LEARNED TO READ!
THAT'S WHY I'M MAKING THIS TAPE RECORDING...
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THE REAL FACTS BEHIND THEIR BREAKUP...
NOT THAT GARBAGE IN THE DAILY BUGLE!
I'M NOT SURE WHERE THIS STORY REALLY BEGINS SO I'LL JUST START WITH ALICIA MASTERS...
"AS YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER, SHE AND THE THING USED TO BE A PRETTY HOT ITEM!
"IT WAS HARDLY A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN!
"SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL BLIND SCULPTRESS, AND HE WAS... WELL... NOT QUITE A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!
"ANYWAY, DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL, BEN EVENTUALLY DROPPED OUT OF THE PICTURE.
"REALIZING THAT ALICIA NEEDED A SHOULDER TO CRY ON, THE TORCH STEPPED IN.
"ACCORDING TO JOHNNY, HE NEVER INTENDED ANYTHING MORE THAN A PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP... AT LEAST IN THE BEGINNING!
"FAMOUS LAST WORDS!"

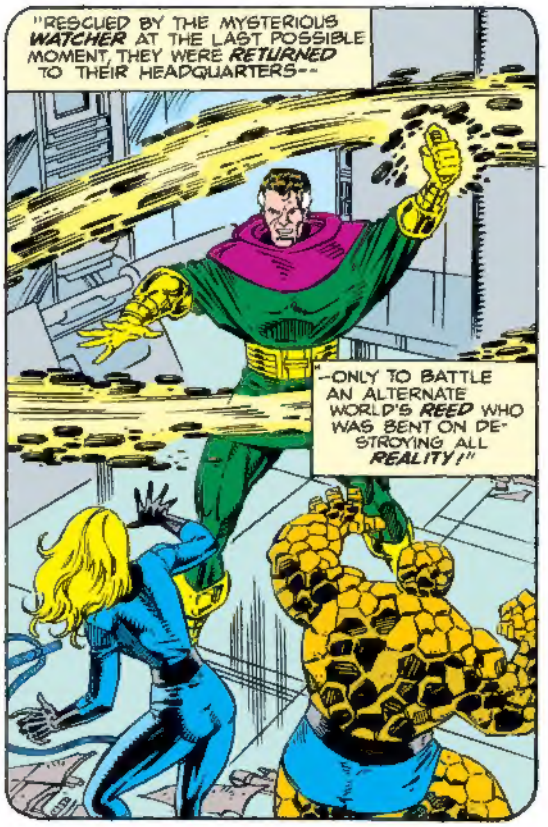
"I STILL REMEMBER HOW SURPRISED AND EXCITED YOU WERE...WHEN YOU FIRST READ ABOUT THEIR ENGAGEMENT!
"BUT THAT WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO JOHNNY'S OWN SHOCKING REVELATION--
"--WHEN HE LATER LEARNED THAT THE 'ALICIA' HE HAD MARRIED WAS ACTUALLY A SHAPE-SHIFTER--
"--A SKRULL NAMED LYJA WHO WAS ONLY PRETENDING TO BE HUMAN!
"AFTER RESCUING THE REAL ALICIA...AND OBTAINING A DIVORCE...JOHNNY THOUGHT LIFE WOULD FINALLY SETTLE DOWN!
"NO SUCH LUCK!
"LYJA AND A FEW FRIENDS AMBUSHED HIM ON THE CAMPUS OF EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY!
"BATTERED UNMERCIFULLY, HIS LIFE HANGING BY A THREAD, THE TORCH SAVED HIMSELF IN THE ONLY WAY HE KNEW HOW...
"HE WENT NOVA!
"PAYING FOR THE RESULTANT DAMAGE ALMOST DROVE THE FANTASTIC FOUR INTO BANKRUPTCY!"

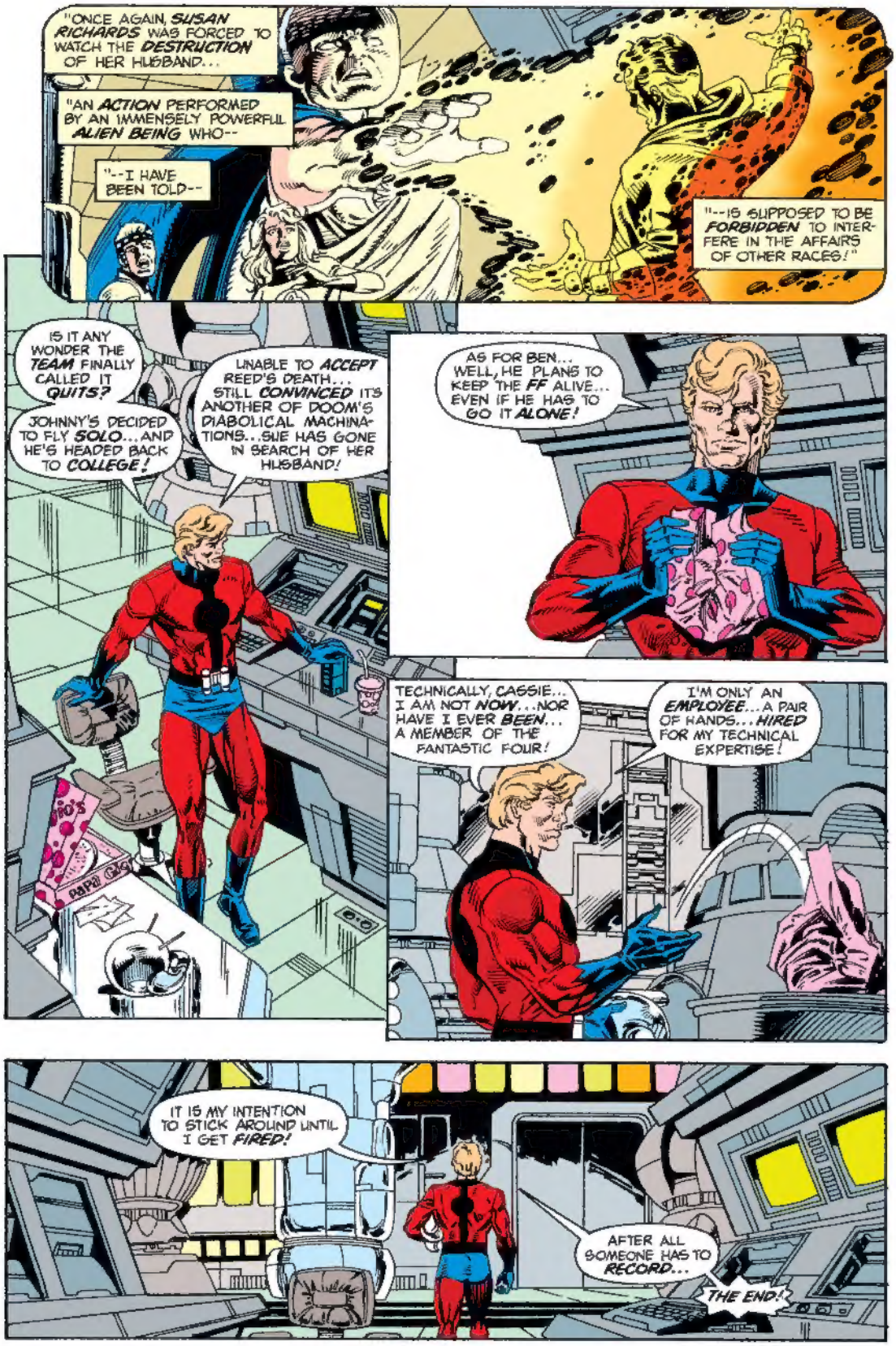

"THEN--TO ADD TO THE COMPLICATIONS--REED'S FATHER, NATHANIEL RICHARDS, UNEXPECTEDLY RETURNED FROM SOME ALTERNATE WORLD WITH DIRE PREDICTIONS OF THE FUTURE--
"AND A MYSTERIOUS AGENDA WHICH HE STILL HAS NOT FULLY REVEALED!
"SHOWING HIS TRUE COLORS, NATHANIEL KIDNAPPED YOUNG FRANKLIN RICHARDS, AND--THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF TIME TRAVEL--RETURNED HIM MERE MOMENTS LATER AS A TEENAGE WARRIOR!
"THAT TRAGEDY WAS SOON ECLIPSED WHEN REED RICHARDS COMPASSIONATELY OFFERED HIS HAND TO HIS GREATEST ENEMY--
"--AND WAS CALLOUSLY MURDERED BY DOCTOR DOOM!
"MEANWHILE, JOHNNY AND LYJA WERE GROWING EVER CLOSER...MAINLY BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THAT SHE WAS CARRYING HIS CHILD!
"BUT SKRULLS ARE REAL DIFFERENT FROM HUMANS...
"INSTEAD OF A BABY...SHE GAVE BIRTH TO AN EGG!
"AND THAT'S WHEN THINGS GOT HAIRY--!
"FIRST, A FLAMING APPARITION OF THE INVISIBLE WOMAN INFORMED THE FF THAT THEY WERE ALL GOING TO DIE..."


"THEN, LYJA'S EGG WAS EXPOSED AS AN ARTIFICIAL IMPLANT WHICH HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

"AND THEN, THE TEAM WAS TRANSPORTED TO A DISTANT, PARALLEL FUTURE--
"--WHERE THEY LEARNED THEY WERE BEING BLAMED FOR THE DEVASTATION OF PLANET EARTH!

"AND, JUST WHEN THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD HIT BOTTOM, THE FF WAS SENT BACK IN TIME TO RE-FIGHT THEIR VERY FIRST BATTLE WITH THE WORLD-EATING GALACTUS...
"A BATTLE, WHICH THEY KNEW FROM THE VERY ONSET, THEY WERE DESTINED TO LOSE!


"RESCUED BY THE MYSTERIOUS WATCHER AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT, THEY WERE RETURNED TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS--
"--ONLY TO BATTLE AN ALTERNATE WORLD'S REED WHO WAS BENT ON DESTROYING ALL REALITY!"


"ONCE AGAIN, SUSAN RICHARDS WAS FORCED TO WATCH THE DESTRUCTION OF HER HUSBAND...
"AN ACTION PERFORMED BY AN IMMENSELY POWERFUL ALIEN BEING WHO--
"--I HAVE BEEN TOLD--
"--IS SUPPOSED TO BE FORBIDDEN TO INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER RACES!"
IS IT ANY WONDER THE TEAM FINALLY CALLED IT QUITS?
JOHNNY'S DECIDED TO FLY SOLO...AND HE'S HEADED BACK TO COLLEGE!
UNABLE TO ACCEPT REED'S DEATH... STILL CONVINCED ITS ANOTHER OF DOOM'S DIABOLICAL MACHINATIONS...SUE HAS GONE IN SEARCH OF HER HUSBAND!
AS FOR BEN... WELL, HE PLANS TO KEEP THE FF ALIVE... EVEN IF HE HAS TO GO IT ALONE!
TECHNICALLY, CASSIE... I AM NOT NOW...NOR HAVE I EVER BEEN... A MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
I'M ONLY AN EMPLOYEE...A PAIR OF HANDS...HIRED FOR MY TECHNICAL EXPERTISE!
IT IS MY INTENTION TO STICK AROUND UNTIL I GET FIRED!
AFTER ALL SOMEONE HAS TO RECORD...
THE END!

REED RICHARDS MISTER FANTASTIC! **BEN GRIMM,** THE THING! **SUE RICHARDS,** INVISIBLE WOMAN! **JOHNNY STORM,** THE HUMAN TORCH! TRANSFORMED BY AN ACCIDENT IN OUTER SPACE INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN, THEY VOWED TO USE THEIR AWESOME POWERS TO HELP MANKIND CHART THE UNKNOWN. STAN LEE PRESENTS. . .

THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

CHOICES

IGNORING THE COOL AND GENTLE RAIN... A DESOLATE FIGURE SLOWLY WANDERS A FAMILIAR STREET... IN RESPONSE TO A MOST MYSTERIOUS SUMMONS...

THE CALLER SAID HE KNEW WHERE I COULD FIND ALICIA MASTERS!

SHE MOVED OUTTA HER APARTMENT A FEW WEEKS AGO... BUT I AIN'T HAD TIME TA HUNT HER DOWN UNTIL NOW!

I JUST WANNA MAKE SURE SHE'S AWRIGHT! IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO AFTER ALL THE GRIEF I PUT 'ER THROUGH!

YANCY ST

IT MUST'A BEEN HARD ENUFF BEIN' BLIND... BUT THEN SHE GOT STUCK WITH A MONSTER FER A BOYFRIEND... AND I HAD TO GO DUMP HER!

THE POOR KID PROBABLY DOESN'T REALIZE THAT I WUS ACTUALLY DOIN' HER A FAVOR!

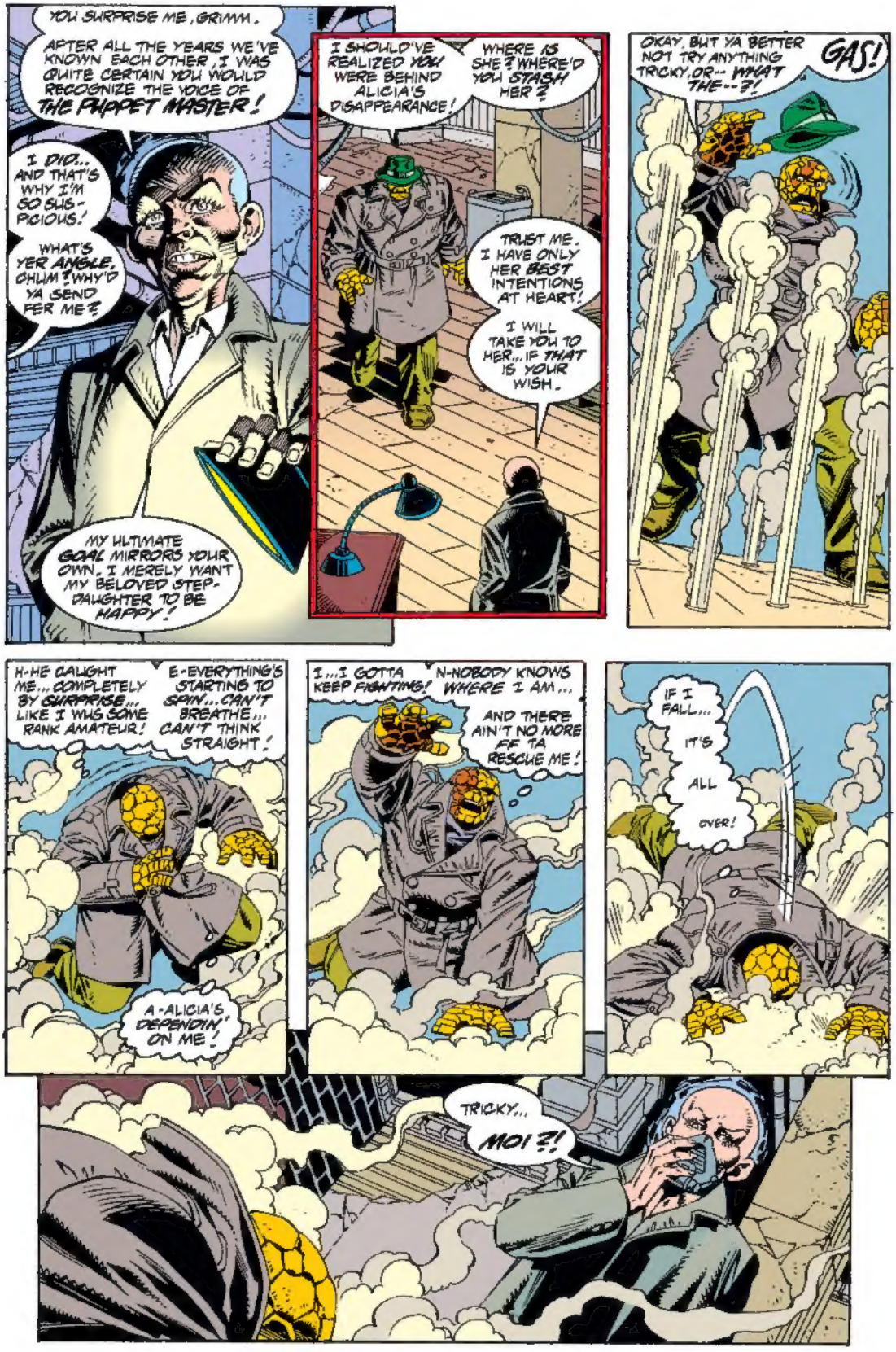
A BRAINLESS GARGOYLE LIKE ME IS BOUND TO ALIENATE ANYONE WHO EVER TRIES TA GET CLOSE TO 'IM!

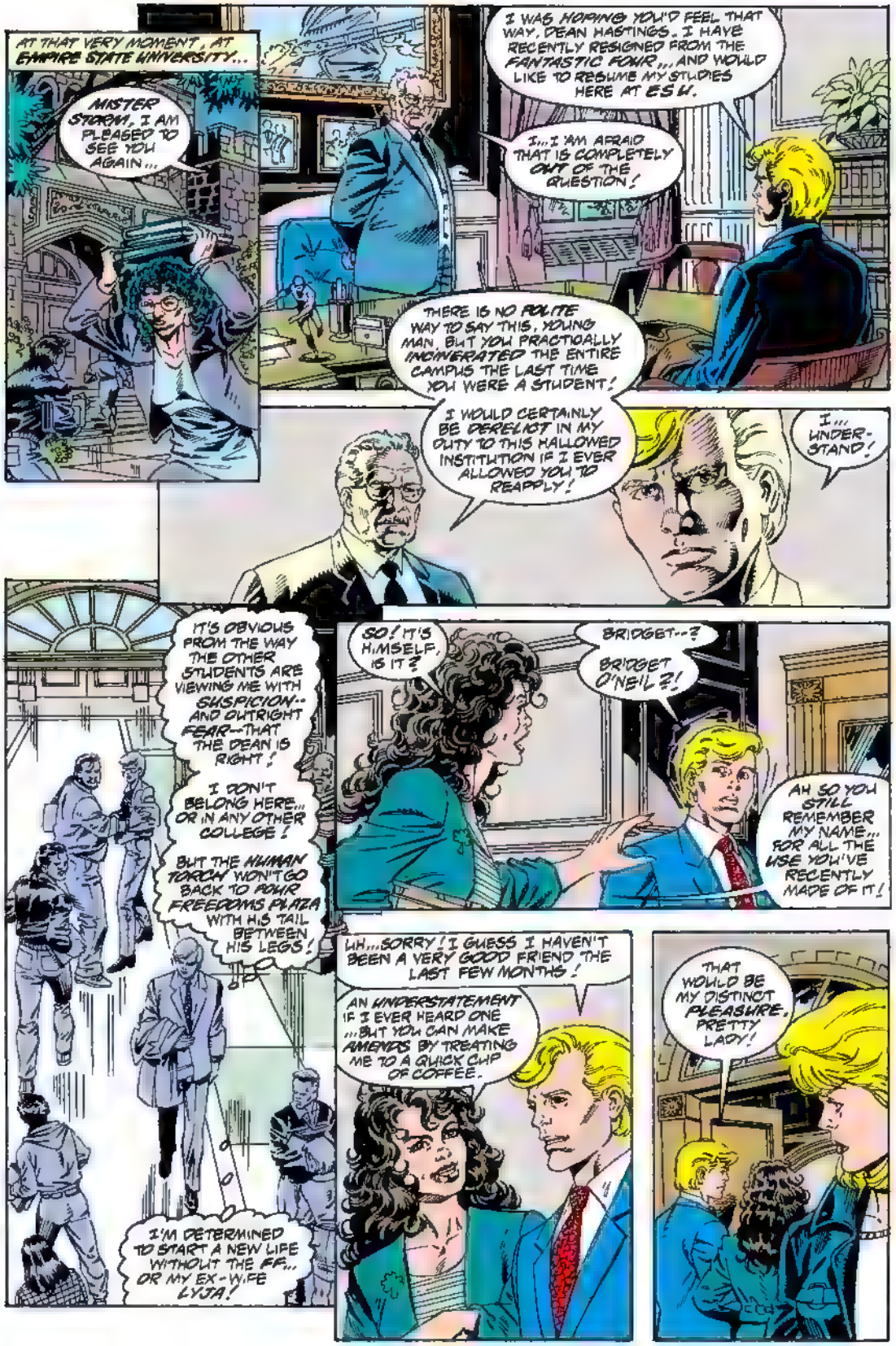
JUST LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

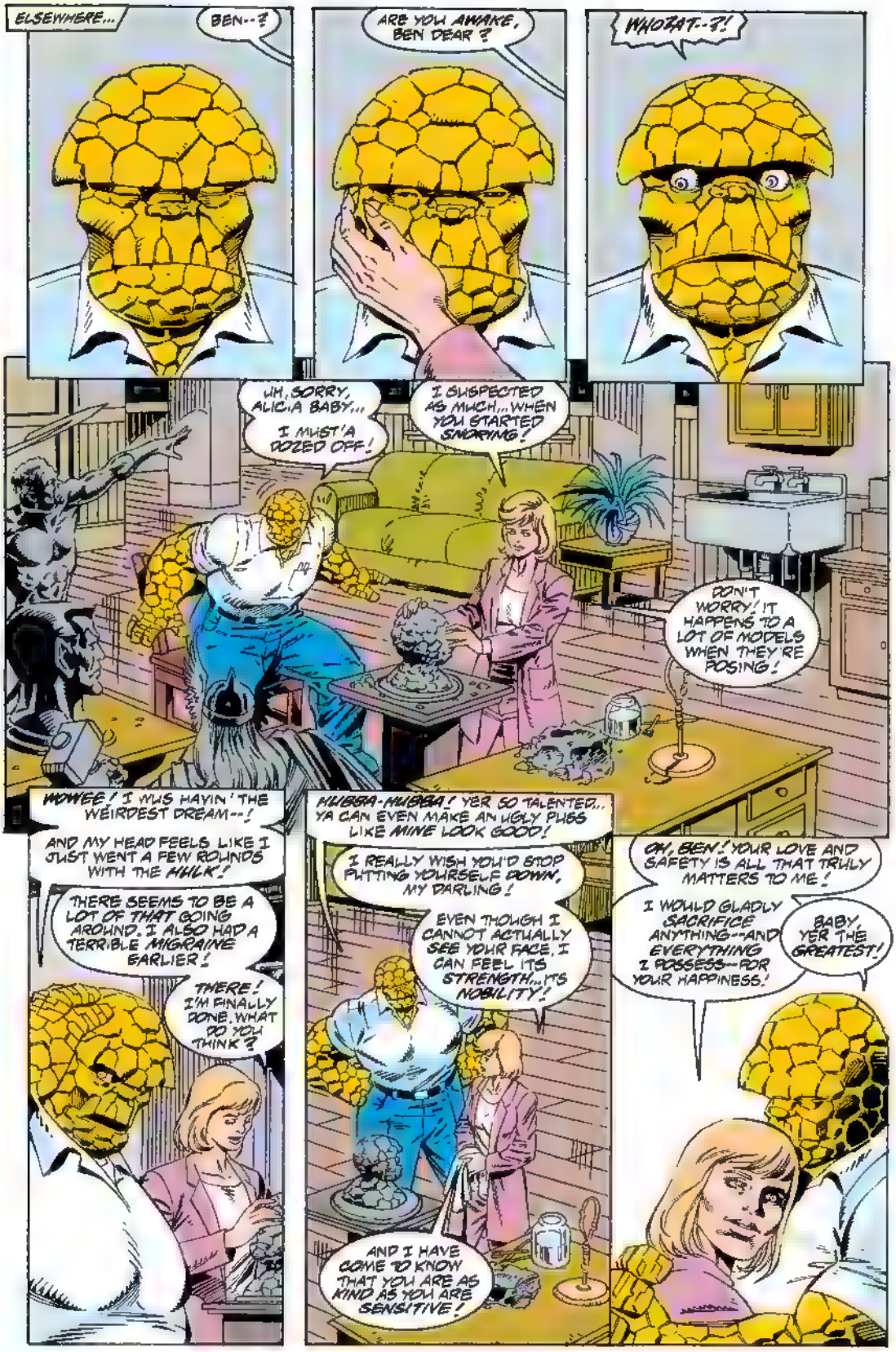
READERS ADVISORY: This is quite possibly the most haunting tale ever produced by...

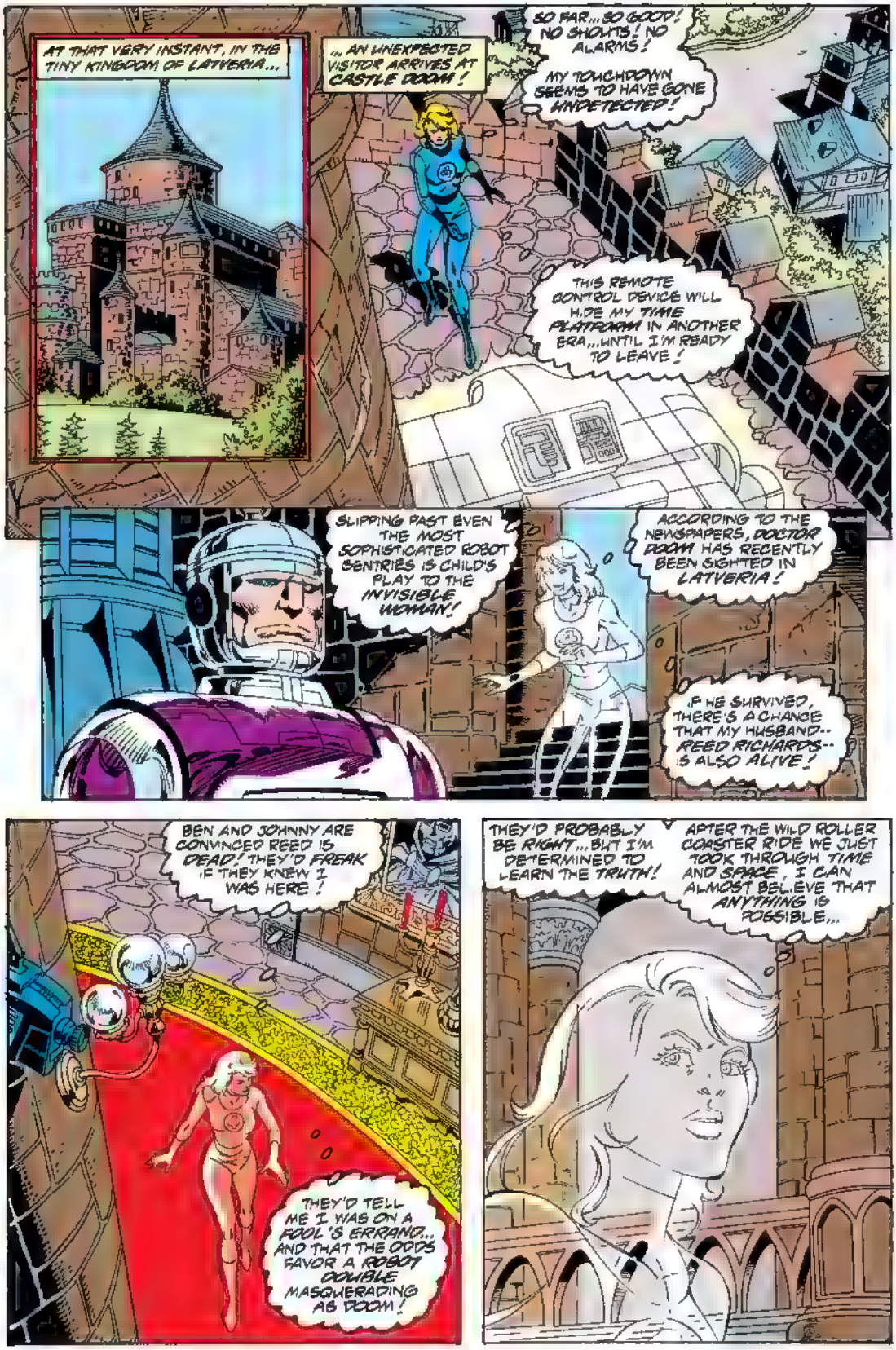
TOM DEFALCO writer | PAUL RYAN artist | DAN BULANADI inker | STEVE DUTRO letterer | JOHN KALISZ colorist | RALPH MACCHIO editor

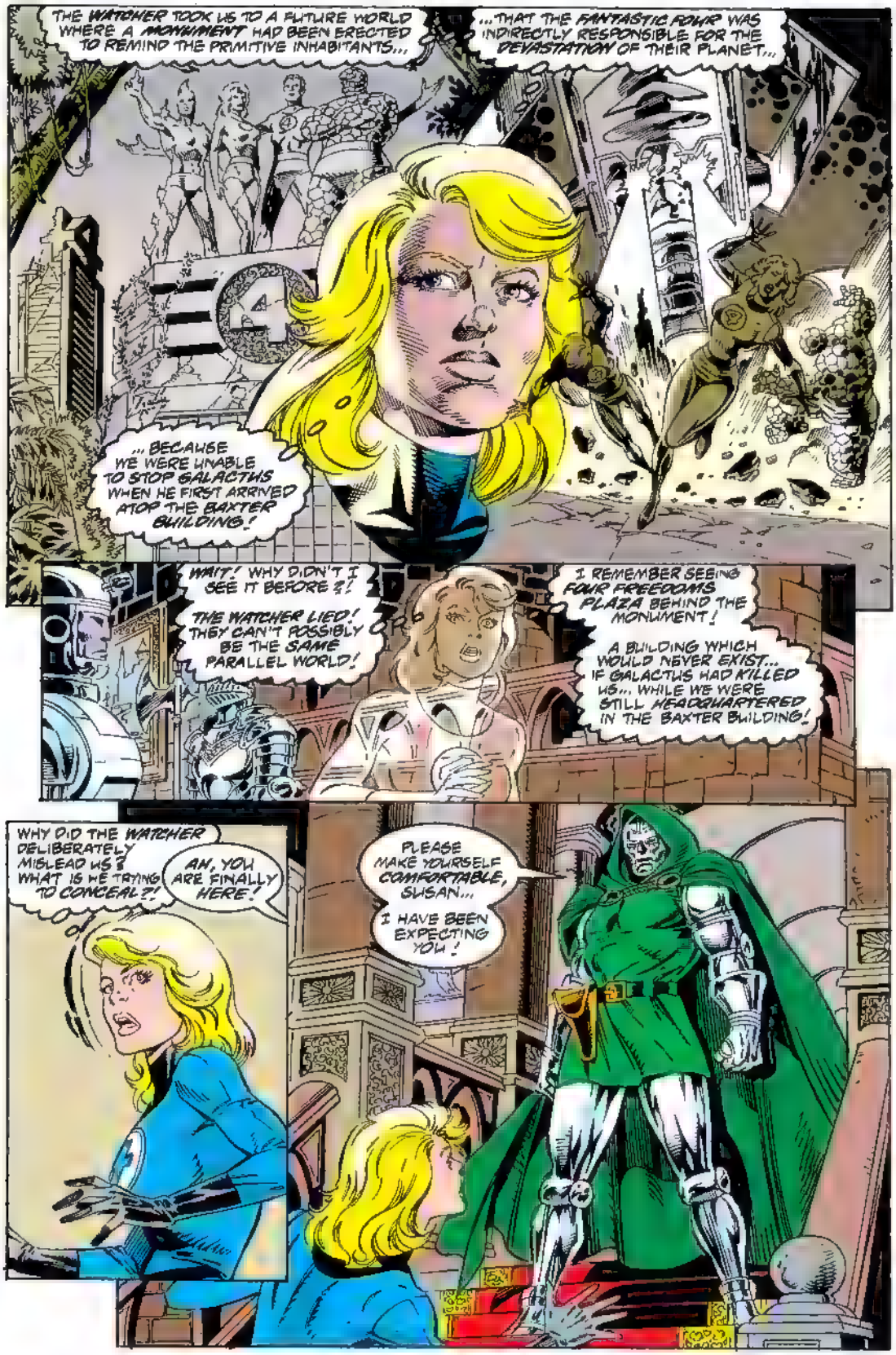
IT'S OVER! THE TEAM HAS FINALLY SPLIT UP FER GOOD!
REED'S DEAD... AND JOHNNY AN' SUZIE TOOK OFF IN SEPARATE DIRECTIONS!
EVERYBODY'S GONE... EXCEPT ME!
OF COURSE, WITH A MUG LIKE MINE, IT AIN'T LIKE I GOT A LOTTA CAREER POSSIBILITIES, OR--HEY!
BE CAREFUL, YOU BIG LUG! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
TAKE IT EASY, PAL! NO ONE WAS HURT! THERE'S NO NEED TO GET SO EXCITED!
WHO ARE YOU TO GIVE ORDERS? I OUGHTA FLATTEN YOU RIGHT WHERE YOU STAND!
LISSEN, MISTER... I DON'T WANT NO TROUBLE!
YER RIGHT! I SHOULD'A BEEN PAYIN' MORE ATTENTION!
SORRY IF I INCONVENIENCED YOU!
YIP.
UH, SURE! NO PROBLEM.
TH-THAT WAS BEN GRIMM... THE THING... I BETTER SCRAM OUTTA HERE! EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT HIS EXPLOSIVE TEMPER-- AND HE'S EVEN MORE TERRIFYING WITH HIS FACE ALL SCARRED!
I MUST BE GETTIN' OLD! A FEW YEARS AGO, I WOULD'A JUST CLOBBERED THAT CREEP, BUT NOW...
HMM... HERE'S THE ADDRESS I WANT!
YOU THE ONE WHO CALLED--?
YES.
STEP INTA THE LIGHT SO'S I CAN GET A GOOD LOOK AT'CHA!

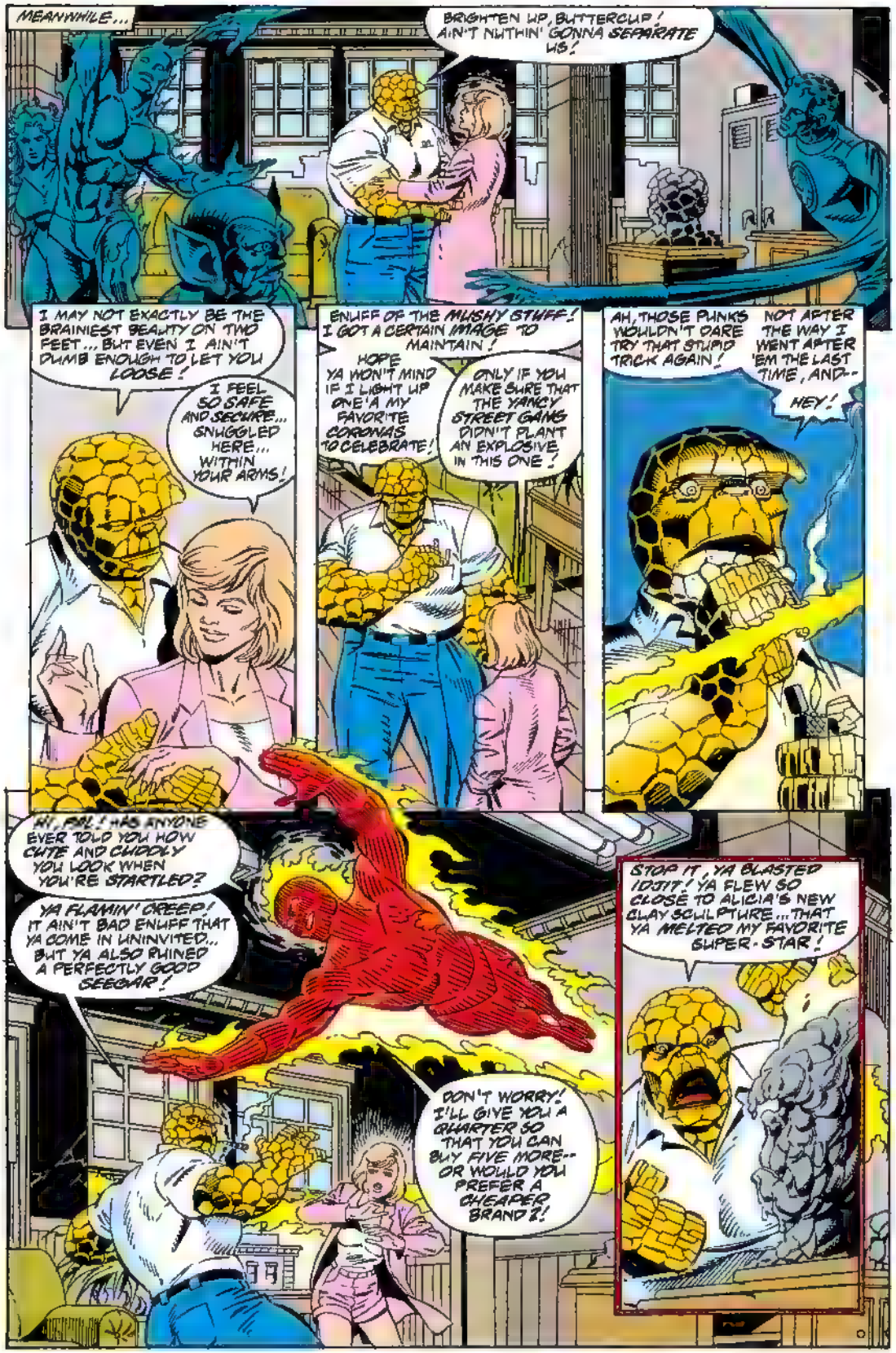

YOU SURPRISE ME, GRIMM. AFTER ALL THE YEARS WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER, I WAS QUITE CERTAIN YOU WOULD RECOGNIZE THE VOICE OF THE PUPPET MASTER!
I DID... AND THAT'S WHY I'M SO SUSPICIOUS!
WHAT'S YER ANGLE, CHUM? WHY'D YA SEND FER ME?
MY ULTIMATE GOAL MIRRORS YOUR OWN. I MERELY WANT MY BELOVED STEPDAUGHTER TO BE HAPPY!
I SHOULD'VE REALIZED YOU WERE BEHIND ALICIA'S DISAPPEARANCE!
WHERE IS SHE? WHERE'D YOU STASH HER?
TRUST ME. I HAVE ONLY HER BEST INTENTIONS AT HEART!
I WILL TAKE YOU TO HER... IF THAT IS YOUR WISH.
OKAY, BUT YA BETTER NOT TRY ANYTHING TRICKY, OR-- WHAT THE--?!
GAS!
H-HE CAUGHT ME... COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE... LIKE I WUZ SOME RANK AMATEUR!
E-EVERYTHING'S STARTING TO SPIN... CAN'T BREATHE... CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT!
A-ALICIA'S DEPENDIN' ON ME!
I... I GOTTA KEEP FIGHTING!
N-NOBODY KNOWS WHERE I AM...
AND THERE AIN'T NO MORE FE TA RESCUE ME!
IF I FALL... IT'S ALL OVER!
TRICKY... MOI?!


AT THAT VERY MOMENT, AT EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY...
MISTER STORM, I AM PLEASED TO SEE YOU AGAIN...
I WAS HOPING YOU'D FEEL THAT WAY, DEAN HASTINGS. I HAVE RECENTLY RESIGNED FROM THE FANTASTIC FOUR... AND WOULD LIKE TO RESUME MY STUDIES HERE AT ESU.
I...I'M AFRAID THAT IS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE QUESTION!
THERE IS NO POLITE WAY TO SAY THIS, YOUNG MAN. BUT YOU PRACTICALLY INCINERATED THE ENTIRE CAMPUS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE A STUDENT!
I WOULD CERTAINLY BE DERELICT IN MY DUTY TO THIS HALLOWED INSTITUTION IF I EVER ALLOWED YOU TO REAPPLY!
I... UNDER-STAND!
IT'S OBVIOUS FROM THE WAY THE OTHER STUDENTS ARE VIEWING ME WITH SUSPICION-- AND OUTRIGHT FEAR--THAT THE DEAN IS RIGHT!
I DON'T BELONG HERE... OR IN ANY OTHER COLLEGE!
BUT THE HUMAN TORCH WON'T GO BACK TO FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS!
I'M DETERMINED TO START A NEW LIFE WITHOUT THE FF... OR MY EX-WIFE LYJA!
SO! IT'S HIMSELF, IS IT?
BRIDGET--?
BRIDGET O'NEIL?!
AH SO YOU STILL REMEMBER MY NAME... FOR ALL THE USE YOU'VE RECENTLY MADE OF IT!
UH...SORRY! I GUESS I HAVEN'T BEEN A VERY GOOD FRIEND THE LAST FEW MONTHS!
AN UNDERSTATEMENT IF I EVER HEARD ONE ...BUT YOU CAN MAKE AMENDS BY TREATING ME TO A QUICK CUP OF COFFEE.
THAT WOULD BE MY DISTINCT PLEASURE, PRETTY LADY!

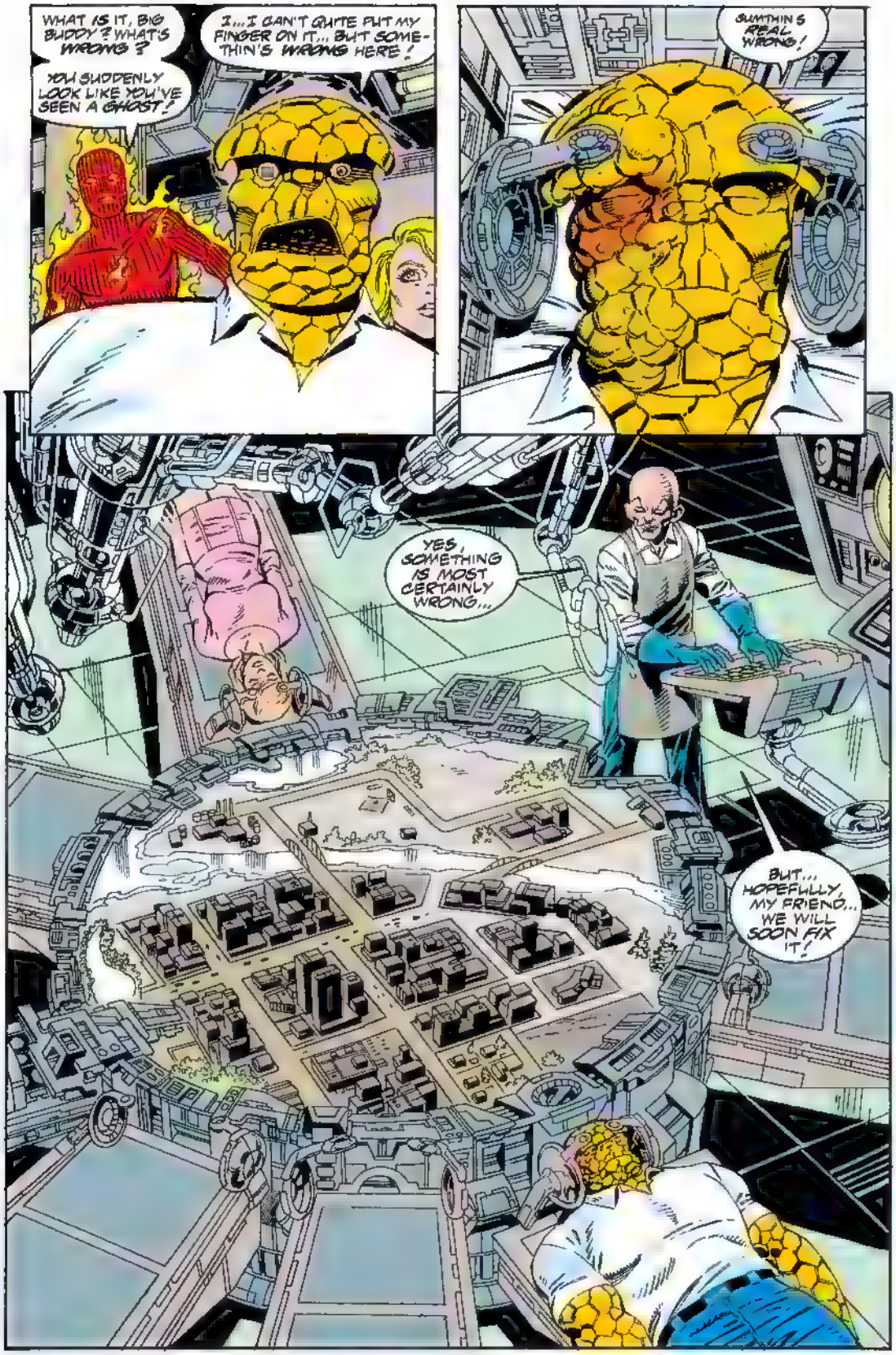

ELSEWHERE...
BEN--?
ARE YOU AWAKE, BEN DEAR?
WHOZAT--?!
UH, SORRY, ALICIA BABY... I MUST'A DOZED OFF!
I SUSPECTED AS MUCH... WHEN YOU STARTED SNORING!
DON'T WORRY! IT HAPPENS TO A LOT OF MODELS WHEN THEY'RE POSING!
MOWEE! I WUS HAVIN' THE WEIRDEST DREAM--!
AND MY HEAD FEELS LIKE I JUST WENT A FEW ROUNDS WITH THE HULK!
THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF THAT GOING AROUND. I ALSO HAD A TERRIBLE MIGRAINE EARLIER!
THERE! I'M FINALLY DONE. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MUBBA-MUBBA! YER SO TALENTED... YA CAN EVEN MAKE AN UGLY PUSS LIKE MINE LOOK GOOD!
I REALLY WISH YOU'D STOP PUTTING YOURSELF DOWN, MY DARLING!
EVEN THOUGH I CANNOT ACTUALLY SEE YOUR FACE, I CAN FEEL ITS STRENGTH... ITS NOBILITY!
AND I HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE AS KIND AS YOU ARE SENSITIVE!
OH, BEN! YOUR LOVE AND SAFETY IS ALL THAT TRULY MATTERS TO ME!
I WOULD GLADLY SACRIFICE ANYTHING--AND EVERYTHING I POSSESS--FOR YOUR HAPPINESS!
BABY, YER THE GREATEST!

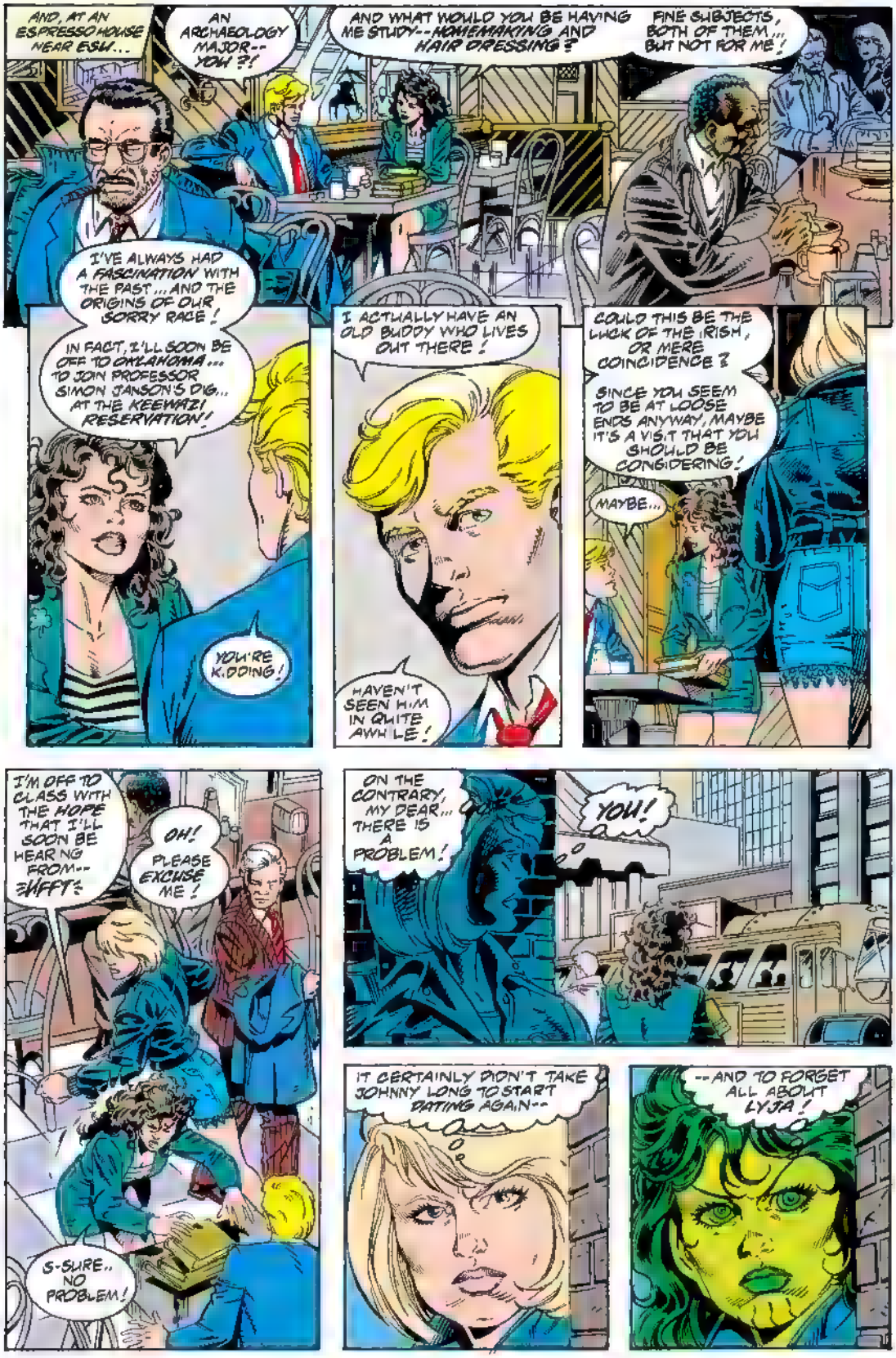

AT THAT VERY INSTANT, IN THE TINY KINGDOM OF LATVERIA...
...AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR ARRIVES AT CASTLE DOOM!
SO FAR...SO GOOD! NO SHOUTS! NO ALARMS!
MY TOUCHDOWN SEEMS TO HAVE GONE UNDETECTED!
THIS REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE WILL HIDE MY TIME PLATFORM IN ANOTHER ERA...UNTIL I'M READY TO LEAVE!
SLIPPING PAST EVEN THE MOST SOPHISTICATED ROBOT SENTRIES IS CHILD'S PLAY TO THE INVISIBLE WOMAN!
ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPERS, DOCTOR DOOM HAS RECENTLY BEEN SIGHTED IN LATVERIA!
IF HE SURVIVED, THERE'S A CHANCE THAT MY HUSBAND--REED RICHARDS--IS ALSO ALIVE!
BEN AND JOHNNY ARE CONVINCED REED IS DEAD! THEY'D FREAK IF THEY KNEW I WAS HERE!
THEY'D TELL ME I WAS ON A FOOL'S ERRAND... AND THAT THE ODDS FAVOR A ROBOT DOUBLE MASQUERADING AS DOOM!
THEY'D PROBABLY BE RIGHT... BUT I'M DETERMINED TO LEARN THE TRUTH!
AFTER THE WILD ROLLER COASTER RIDE WE JUST TOOK THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, I CAN ALMOST BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE...

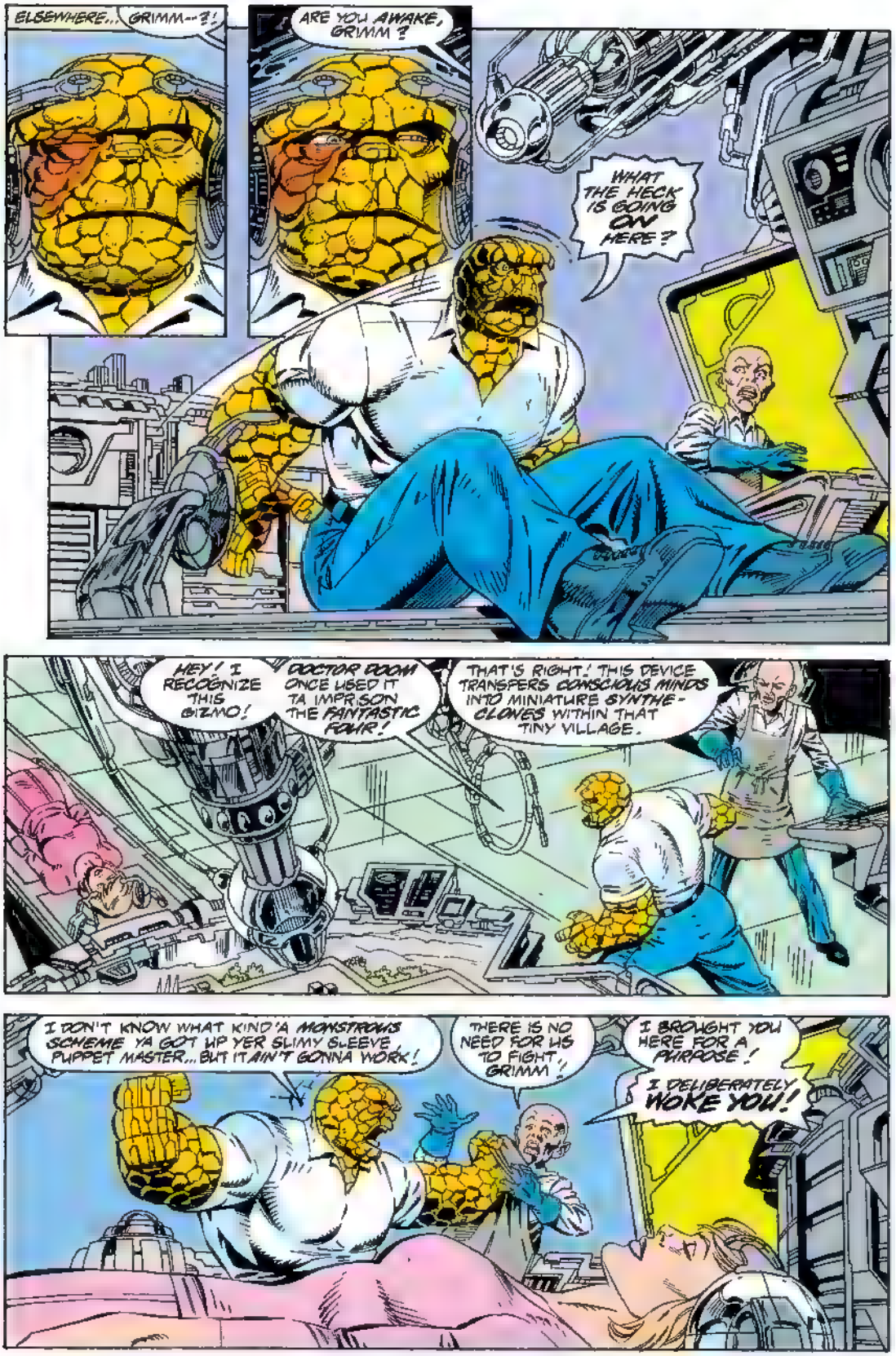

THE WATCHER TOOK US TO A FUTURE WORLD WHERE A MONUMENT HAD BEEN ERECTED TO REMIND THE PRIMITIVE INHABITANTS...
...THAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR WAS INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVASTATION OF THEIR PLANET...
...BECAUSE WE WERE UNABLE TO STOP GALACTUS WHEN HE FIRST ARRIVED ATOP THE BAXTER BUILDING!
WAIT! WHY DIDN'T I SEE IT BEFORE?!
THE WATCHER LIED! THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THE SAME PARALLEL WORLD!
I REMEMBER SEEING FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA BEHIND THE MONUMENT!
A BUILDING WHICH WOULD NEVER EXIST... IF GALACTUS HAD KILLED US... WHILE WE WERE STILL HEADQUARTERED IN THE BAXTER BUILDING!
WHY DID THE WATCHER DELIBERATELY MISLEAD US? WHAT IS HE TRYING TO CONCEAL?!
AH, YOU ARE FINALLY HERE!
PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, SUSAN...
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!


MEANWHILE...
BRIGHTEN UP, BUTTERCUP! AIN'T NUTHIN' GONNA SEPARATE US!
I MAY NOT EXACTLY BE THE BRAINIEST BEAUTY ON TWO FEET... BUT EVEN I AIN'T DUMB ENOUGH TO LET YOU LOOSE!
I FEEL SO SAFE AND SECURE... SNUGGLED HERE... WITHIN YOUR ARMS!
ENUFF OF THE MUSHY STUFF! I GOT A CERTAIN IMAGE TO MAINTAIN!
HOPE YA WON'T MIND IF I LIGHT UP ONE'A MY FAVORITE CORONAS TO CELEBRATE!
ONLY IF YOU MAKE SURE THAT THE YANCY STREET GANG DIDN'T PLANT AN EXPLOSIVE IN THIS ONE!
AH, THOSE PUNKS WOULDN'T DARE TRY THAT STUPID TRICK AGAIN!
NOT AFTER THE WAY I WENT AFTER 'EM THE LAST TIME, AND--
HEY!
HI, PAL! HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU HOW CUTE AND CUDDLY YOU LOOK WHEN YOU'RE STARTLED?
YA FLAMIN' CREEP! IT AIN'T BAD ENUFF THAT YA COME IN UNINVITED... BUT YA ALSO RUINED A PERFECTLY GOOD SEEGAR!
DON'T WORRY! I'LL GIVE YOU A QUARTER SO THAT YOU CAN BUY FIVE MORE-- OR WOULD YOU PREFER A CHEAPER BRAND?!
STOP IT, YA BLASTED IDJIT! YA FLEW SO CLOSE TO ALICIA'S NEW CLAY SCULPTURE... THAT YA MELTED MY FAVORITE SUPER-STAR!

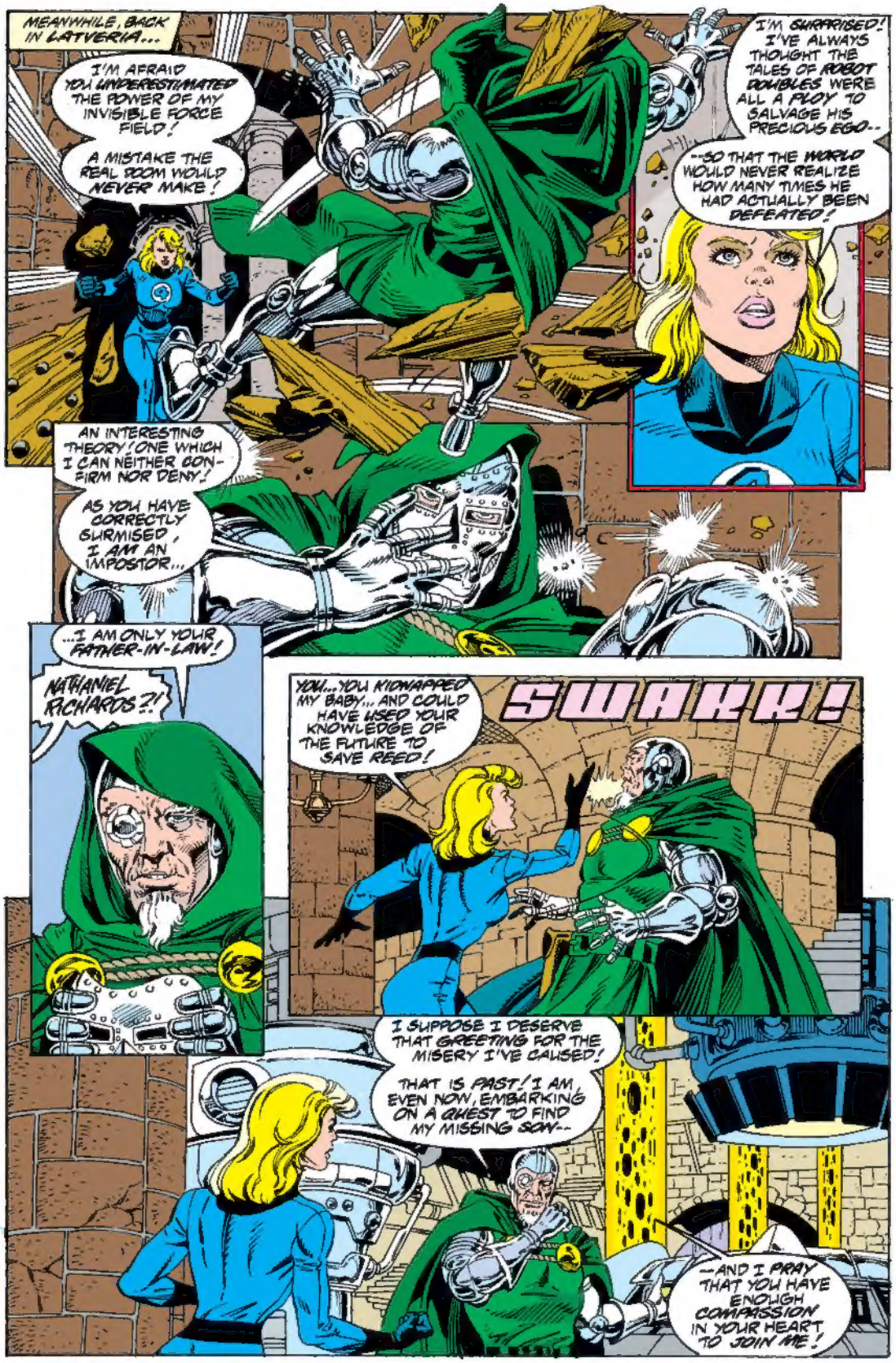
I'M SORRY! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
ALTHOUGH IN THIS CASE...
...I MAY HAVE ACTUALLY IMPROVED IT!
THIS IS ALICIA'S ART STUDIO, YOU KNUCKLEHEAD ...NOT A BLASTED RUMPUS ROOM!
I KNOW JUST HOW TA HANDLE A PESKY MATCHSTICK LIKE YOU--!
THERE! THIS OUGHT'A COOL YA OFF!
HEY! SOMETHING'S PREVENTIN' THE WATER FROM DOUSIN' YA!
THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!
I WANTED TO STOP THIS NONSENSE BEFORE IT GOT OUT OF HAND!
AH SUZIE...YA ALWAYS BUTT IN JUST WHEN THINGS ARE GETTIN' INTERESTING!
TAKE THAT CHIP OFF YOUR SHOULDER, OLD FRIEND!
YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT SUSAN ONLY HAS YOUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART!
REED--?!

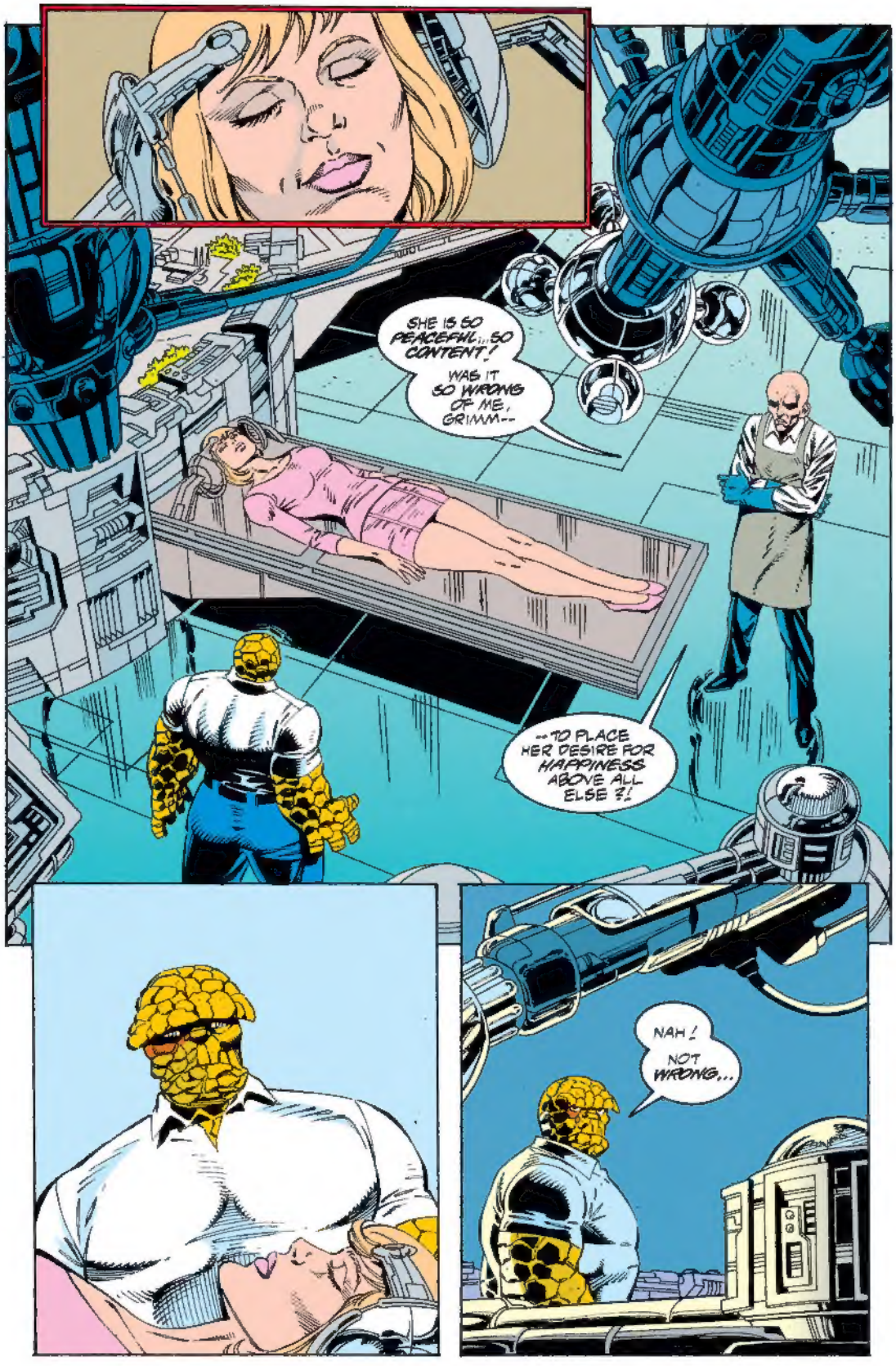

WHAT IS IT, BIG BUDDY? WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU SUDDENLY LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST!
I...I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT... BUT SOMETHIN'S WRONG HERE!
SUMTHIN'S REAL WRONG!
YES, SOMETHING IS MOST CERTAINLY WRONG...
BUT... HOPEFULLY, MY FRIEND... WE WILL SOON FIX IT!


AND, AT AN ESPRESSO HOUSE NEAR ESU...
AN ARCHAEOLOGY MAJOR--YOU?!
AND WHAT WOULD YOU BE HAVING ME STUDY--HOMEMAKING AND HAIR DRESSING?
FINE SUBJECTS, BOTH OF THEM,... BUT NOT FOR ME!
I'VE ALWAYS HAD A FASCINATION WITH THE PAST...AND THE ORIGINS OF OUR SORRY RACE!
IN FACT, I'LL SOON BE OFF TO OKLAHOMA... TO JOIN PROFESSOR SIMON JANSON'S DIG... AT THE KEEWAZI RESERVATION!
YOU'RE KIDDING!
I ACTUALLY HAVE AN OLD BUDDY WHO LIVES OUT THERE!
HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN QUITE AWHILE!
COULD THIS BE THE LUCK OF THE IRISH, OR MERE COINCIDENCE?
SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE AT LOOSE ENDS ANYWAY, MAYBE IT'S A VISIT THAT YOU SHOULD BE CONSIDERING!
MAYBE...
I'M OFF TO CLASS WITH THE HOPE THAT I'LL SOON BE HEARING FROM--WFFT!
OH! PLEASE EXCUSE ME!
S-SURE.. NO PROBLEM!
ON THE CONTRARY, MY DEAR... THERE IS A PROBLEM!
YOU!
IT CERTAINLY DIDN'T TAKE JOHNNY LONG TO START DATING AGAIN--
--AND TO FORGET ALL ABOUT LYJA!


ELSEWHERE... GRIMM--?!
ARE YOU AWAKE, GRIMM?
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE?
HEY! I RECOGNIZE THIS GIZMO!
DOCTOR DOOM ONCE USED IT TA IMPRISON THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
THAT'S RIGHT! THIS DEVICE TRANSFERS CONSCIOUS MINDS INTO MINIATURE SYNTHE-CLONES WITHIN THAT TINY VILLAGE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND'A MONSTROUS SCHEME YA GOT UP YER SLIMY SLEEVE, PUPPET MASTER... BUT IT AIN'T GONNA WORK!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR HIS TO FIGHT, GRIMM.
I BROUGHT YOU HERE FOR A PURPOSE!
I DELIBERATELY WOKE YOU!

ALL RIGHT! START TALKIN'! TELL ME WHAT YA DID TA US-- AND WHY!
MY STEPDAUGHTER WAS SO DEPRESSED... SO DESPONDENT... AFTER YOU ABANDONED HER!
I ONLY WANTED TO MAKE HER HAPPY!
THUS I RECREATED A WORLD... AND TIME... SHE LOVED!
LOOK AT HER--! I HAVE GIVEN HER THE LIFE SHE MOST DESIRES... THE LIFE SHE WOULD CHOOSE FOR HERSELF!
B-BUT IT AIN'T... REAL.
IT IS... ...TO HER!
QUITE A PAINFUL DILEMMA...
DO I ALLOW HER TO LINGER IN THIS COMFORTING COCOON OF FANTASY AND MEMORY?
OR, SHOULD I CONDEMN HER TO THE HARSH AND UNCARING REALITY WHICH HAS BROUGHT HER SO MUCH PAIN?
WHY'D YA BRING ME HERE?
THOUGH WE USUALLY MEET AS ENEMIES... WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN UNITED... IN OUR LOVE FOR ALICIA!
I WANT MY STEP-DAUGHTER TO BE HAPPY... BUT FOR ONCE I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR HER! MY HEART... IN SUCH TURMOIL--!
HELP ME, GRIMM! PUT ASIDE YOUR HATRED OF ME, AND-- PLEASE... PLEASE THIS ONCE, HELP ME!


MEANWHILE, BACK IN LATVERIA...
I'M AFRAID YOU UNDERESTIMATED THE POWER OF MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!
A MISTAKE THE REAL DOOM WOULD NEVER MAKE!
I'M SURPRISED! I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THE TALES OF ROBOT DOUBLES WERE ALL A PLOY TO SALVAGE HIS PRECIOUS EGO--
--SO THAT THE WORLD WOULD NEVER REALIZE HOW MANY TIMES HE HAD ACTUALLY BEEN DEFEATED!
AN INTERESTING THEORY! ONE WHICH I CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY!
AS YOU HAVE CORRECTLY SURMISED, I AM AN IMPOSTOR...
...I AM ONLY YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW!
NATHANIEL RICHARDS?!
SWAK!
YOU...YOU KIDNAPPED MY BABY... AND COULD HAVE USED YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE TO SAVE REED!
I SUPPOSE I DESERVE THAT GREETING FOR THE MISERY I'VE CAUSED!
THAT IS PAST! I AM, EVEN NOW, EMBARKING ON A QUEST TO FIND MY MISSING SON--
--AND I PRAY THAT YOU HAVE ENOUGH COMPASSION IN YOUR HEART TO JOIN ME!


SHE IS SO PEACEFUL...SO CONTENT!
WAS IT SO WRONG OF ME, GRIMM--
--TO PLACE HER DESIRE FOR HAPPINESS ABOVE ALL ELSE?!
NAH! NOT WRONG...

KIND'A MISGUIDED.
MEMORIES ARE MEANT TA BE CHERISHED...
...BUT YA CAN'T LIVE IN THE PAST!
AS PAINFUL AS IT IS AT TIMES, YOU GOTTA LEARN TA MOVE ON--
--AND DEAL WITH THE PRESENT!
THAT FANTASY WORLD WAS A LIE!
ALICIA DESERVES BETTER!
SHE'LL REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS IN A FEW MINUTES.
THEN...I'D BETTER GO!
I BELONG TO HER PAST...AND I'D ONLY HOLD HER BACK!
IT'S TIME THE TWO OF US GOT ON WITH OUR SEPARATE LIVES--
--AND STARTED THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE!
THE END